

Beauty and the Immortal: It started with a dig

Chapter 17 - Hide and Seek

Chapter 17: Hide and Seek

20

Mallory watched George run out of the castle's grand entrance with a speed she didn't know he possessed. However, when she turned, she caught Hadeon's amused yet darkly delighted gaze.

"How about a little deal with me, Mallory Winchester?" Hadeon proposed, the corner of his mouth curling as he held the hammer.

7

"I highly doubt it would be to my liking," Mallory responded in apprehension.

11

"Oh, this offer will interest you," Hadeon promised with a grin. He continued, "We shall play an exciting game of hide and seek. Should I catch you before I do little Georgie, you'll agree to bind yourself in my service—no more of this little game of escape. However, if I catch him first, I'll grant you your freedom."

26

Mallory was intrigued but suspicious at the same time. She pressed, "Why? I thought you were dealing with George."

"Isn't it obvious, monkey?" Hadeon smiled in a way that unnerved her. "A little wager to ensure you remain on your best behaviour. Refuse, and we might have to resort to... discipline that you might find less pleasant."

10

Mallory stared hard at him before asking, "How do I know you won't hunt me first the moment I step outside the castle?"

"Fair point. It's first come, first kill," Hadeon replied nonchalantly. "You both have the whole estate to hide. I have sent Cawlin on an errand, so he won't be here to help me cheat. I shall count to a hundred and will walk *slowly* so that you have a good chance," he ran his tongue across one of his fangs, his eyes glowing like a predator.

13

"One, two, three," Hadeon started to count down, and Mallory's eyes widened.

7

"Wait!" Mallory panicked, swiftly ditching her chain on a nearby surface and then running out of the castle.

3

As she ran, Mallory cursed her luck, "Never laugh at another's plight," as she mirrored George's comedic escape. She then said to herself, "I should find the idiot first and then run ahead of him."

11

Under the moonlight, Mallory made her way past the gardens, quickening her pace as she entered the gloomy forest. The deeper she ventured, the trees grew denser, blocking the moonlight and casting shadows along with the whispers of the night breeze. Feeling a little cold, she tightened the scarf around her neck.

After ten minutes, she stopped running and now walked. She came upon an area that had heaps of mud on the sides, which looked familiar. Someone had dug out the ground. Turning a little curious, she moved closer when her eyes fell on six lined-up closed coffins. Though curious, she didn't dare to open any of them.

9

"Don't do it, Mal. Been there, done that, got the trauma," Mallory reminded herself. "Opening one coffin was enough for a lifetime."

23

Elsewhere in the forest, George frantically ran in circles. He felt chilly with the air touching his now exposed scalp and wanted to stop for a moment and cry.

9

"Where the fuck is the end to this?!!!" George asked in frustration. But the truth was that the estate was vast, making it almost never-ending. "Father!"

9

To make sure that Hadeon wasn't pursuing him, George looked behind him. But as if summoning bad luck, he heard a chillingly cheerful voice,

"Yoo-hoo! Where are you, Georgie?"

8

"Bloody hell!" George spat, his heart racing. In a pathetic attempt to hide, he tried to climb up a tree, only to fail miserably. Deciding a bush was his next best option, he crouched and hid behind it.

2

Hadeon, on the other hand, came into view, the very picture of a predator playing with his food. Twigs delicately broke under his shoes as he walked. Tapping the hammer against a nearby tree, he mused aloud,

6

"Ever consider yourself a lucky man, Georgie? Though I have killed a few since I woke up, I will make sure you are treated with a special coffin. Of course, it is another matter that no one you know will ever find you after that," he said in a nonchalant tone.

3

George's blood ran cold. The once-arrogant nobleman was now nothing more than a cornered animal, eyes wide with terror at the sight of Hadeon's twisted grin and the hammer. The human's face almost morphed into that of a man in distress. When he looked up, he noticed Hadeon was gone.

3

And then suddenly, George felt an unexpected tap on his shoulder. Turning around, his heart nearly leaped out. Hadeon had squatted beside him, mirroring his position with a look of fake concern on his face.

20

"Lost something down here, have we?" Hadeon asked in a serious tone while craning his neck to look at the bush. Blood drained from George's face, a silent scream in his eyes. "Or were you hunting for something like this?" He lifted the hammer only to bring it down onto George's foot.

3

"AHHHHHH!!!!" the scream erupted from George from the excruciating pain.

"AHHHHHH!!!!" Hadeon screamed along with George, his eyes wide with mock horror, and it scared the human next to him. He then exclaimed, "You scared me! Thought

there was a monster in the bushes. Don't do that! My heart is too delicate for such shocks," he scolded, placing his hand on his chest.

45

George attempted to scramble to his feet and began to limp.

"I've come across quite a few humans in my time," Hadeon commented as he trailed behind George's clumsy escape. "But none have shrieked quite as... melodiously high-pitched as yours. Shall we perhaps move to the next foot?"

8

Terror-stricken, George pleaded, "NO! What do you want from me?! Money? I have money—I can give you money!"

3

Hadeon laughed, which sounded cold yet delightful. He mocked,

"How benevolent of you to offer your petty wealth. You are bringing tears to my eyes. Oh, wait, it was just the dust. Never mind." A sinister smile played on his lips, and he said, "My interest lies beyond materialistic things. I am more of a body collector, if you know what I mean."

3

"I'll take down those posters the moment I get back!" George bargained. "Just let me live!"

6

"And when did I ever express displeasure at being the talk of the town?" Hadeon mused, the hammer spinning effortlessly in his grip. "I enjoy the attention. Recognition, be it good or bad, suits me just the same."

7

"I will change the pictures! I will make it look handsome," George blurted out, walking backwards as Hadeon's dark laughter filled the air. "Just the way you want it!"

5

"Look? I am plenty handsome, boy. Far surpassing anything your lineage could ever hope to produce in the future. If you survive, that is. What I want is to hear the symphony of your screams as I pull out your nails from each finger and toe. Let us not

forget your kneecaps under my hammer." Hadeon elaborated on his plan and saw fear creep into George's eyes. "The sound of it breaking is absolutely wonderful!"

11

"NO!" George's scream pierced the air, drawing Mallory's attention, who wasn't far from there. Panic fueling his steps, he started to limp away, desperate to escape Hadeon's gruesome plans.

George, in panic and lack of grace, stumbled into the same site where Mallory had been a while ago. Only this time, the coffins were wide open, as if holding an invitation. The man wobbled before falling with a thud and landing right into the coffin.

15

Mallory, who had just arrived there, watched with a mix of horror and bewilderment as George fell.

"...!"

Walking closer, her eyebrows knitted in confusion, she noticed the open, cushioned coffins. Were there people in there earlier?! Where did they go? Hearing an owl's distant hoot, she momentarily turned away from the coffins. Her sterling blue eyes anxiously looked left and right, feeling the eerie quietness she was wrapped in.

Then suddenly, her eyes fell on a bat hanging on a tree with gold eyes. The very next second, it transformed into Hadeon, who elegantly landed on the ground.

21

What did she just see?! As she took a step back, her foot slipped on the edge of the grave, sending her staggering backward into the open arms of the coffin.

2

Within a second, Hadeon appeared before her, and his hand caught her scarf that had fluttered and gently pulled her away from the grave. Her heart pounded in her chest, her breath heavy as her wide, shocked, sterling blue eyes met Hadeon's golden eyes.

8

"This is the second time I pulled you away from going to the grave, monkey. Also," Hadeon remarked with amusement and a sly grin forming on his lips. Letting go of her scarf, he declared, "Caught you."

7

"What?!" Mallory shot back.

"The game has come to an end, and it is unfortunate you have lost," Hadeon announced triumphantly. "My sympathies are with you."

3

"No, I didn't," Mallory said, narrowing her eyes at him.

"I know you have difficulty accepting the truth, but it is what it is," Hadeon stated in a matter-of-fact tone. "I am sure you will do better. If there's a next time."

4

This manipulative bastard! Mallory then pointedly said, "You found George first."

"Ah, but my dear, I didn't touch him. Besides, he's turned into an invalid pawn for the game considering his fortunate nap. Which leaves you. So," Hadeon drawled before he brought his hand forward and near her face.

8

"Don't. Even. Think," Mallory warned, trying to lean backwards. But her words only fed the unruly being before her as he touched her nose and gently pushed it.

5

Hadeon playfully remarked, "Boop!"

40